

OFFICIAL COPY.

Dr. F. St. George Mivart's Report to the Local Government Board on the General Sanitary Circumstances and Administration of the Chailey Rural District.

RICH^D. THORNE THORNE,
Medical Officer,
October 10th, 1899.

The Chailey Rural District, in the County of Sussex, occupies an area of 49,973 acres, extending from the South Downs in a northerly direction almost to the town of Hayward's Heath and the lower southern slopes of Ashdown Forest, while the south-eastern extremity of it almost entirely encircles the Borough of Lewes.

For the purposes of registration it is now distributed among three registration sub-districts, viz., those of Lewes, Chailey, and Ditchling, and it forms part of the Registration District of Lewes, although it is not coterminous with that area.

On the north the Chailey Rural District is bounded by the Cuckfield Rural District, which also adjoins it on the west, the Urban District of Hayward's Heath interposing on the north-west. On the south-west and south the Steyning Rural District, the Newhaven Rural District, and the Borough of Lewes respectively form the boundaries. On the south-east it is adjoined by the Eastbourne and Hailsham Rural Districts; while on the east side lies the Uckfield Rural District.

The Chailey Rural District contains 18 parishes, four of which are entirely rural and contain no aggregation of population. Many of the villages are of an extremely scattered character, and I am unable to obtain the exact populations of these places. In the following Table I have set out the facts as to areas, populations, and rateable values of the respective parishes.

Parishes.	Registration Sub-district.	Area in Acres.	Population.		Rateable Value.	Reference to page of Report whereon the Parish finds mention.
			Census 1891.	Census 1881.		
Barcombe...	Chailey	5,032	1,068	1,182	8,402	4
Beddingham ...	Lewes	2,888	454	448	4,463	5
Chailey...	Chailey	5,939	1,333	1,522	6,717	5
Ditchling ...	Ditchling	4,265	1,226	1,342	8,294	6
East Chiltington	Ditchling	1,671	436	412	3,361	7
Glynde ...	Lewes	1,570	329	284	2,823	7
Hamsey ...	Chailey	2,745	564	553	5,732	8
Newick ..	Chailey	1,977	1,033	1,083	4,510	9
Plumpton ...	Ditchling	2,450	468	466	3,703	9
Ringmer ...	Chailey	5,739	1,497	1,388	7,632	10
St. Ann Without ...	Lewes	1,552	82	84	2,154	11
St. John Without ...	Chailey	1,202	146	75	2,078	11
South Malling Without	Lewes	2,367	241	183	3,833	11
Southover Without ...	Lewes	288	19	15	447	11
Street ...	Ditchling	1,281	208	183	1,761	11
West Firle ...	Lewes	3,429	530	573	5,201	11
Westmeston ...	Ditchling	2,436	282	326	2,396	12
Wivelsfield ...	Ditchling	3,142	1,983	1,916	9,523	12

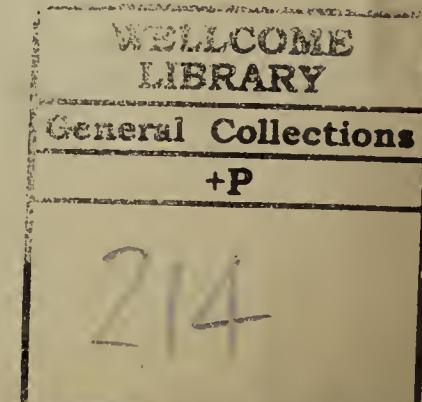
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The district is undulating in character and contains much uncultivated land. It is drained, as to the central and eastern portions, by the rivers Ouse, Longford, Glynde, and their tributaries; the western portion contains no watercourses of any great volume.

The geology of the district is of a very varied character. Proceeding from south to north Chalk is at first met with, after which belts of Upper Green Sand, Gault, and Lower Green Sand are encountered in succession. Beyond this the district is crossed by a wide belt of Weald Clay, north of which the Tunbridge Wells Sand extends to the northern boundary of the district. The area of the Weald Clay formation is thinly populated.

The inhabitants are almost exclusively occupied with agricultural pursuits, of which milk-farming is the most important. Brick and tile making are also carried on in some localities. The agreeable climate of the district, and the picturesque scenery of the more northern and eastern portions, attract numerous summer visitors, especially from Brighton and London, to find lodgings in the farmsteads, the inhabitants of many of which now derive a regular income from this source. It appears likely that in the future there will be an increase of population in the direction of Newick, Chailey, and possibly Ringmer, of a class likely to make demand for houses of a superior character.

GENERAL SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Dwelling Accommodation.—No instances of crowding of houses upon area nor of excessive crowding of persons in houses were met with during my visit, though cases of the latter kind were spoken of as having occurred from time to time. As a general rule throughout the district, garden space is ample for the needs of the inhabitants. On the other hand, many houses were seen which, owing to absence of proper water supply, should not be regarded as fit for habitation until such has been provided. Numerous instances of defective or broken eavespouting were seen, while the want of proper paving and drainage of curtilages was another common defect. Certain houses, and some, too, among those recently built, were spoken of as being damp, owing to thinness of walls.

Water Supply.—Speaking generally, the water supply must be said to be extremely unsatisfactory throughout the Rural district. With the exception of the small town of Ditchling, and certain houses in the parish of Wivelsfield, I heard of no locality in which a supply of water was provided from the mains of a water company or sanitary authority. For its water supply the district is almost entirely dependent upon wells, a very large number of which are obviously exposed to pollution, owing to the storage of filth in privies or disposal of it on garden ground near the wells. Of the great number of wells that I had opportunity of inspecting, I saw few that were not merely dry steined. Not a few wells in the district are regarded by the tenants as being contaminated, and in some cases water is habitually fetched from a distance. Certain samples of thick and muddy water used for drinking purposes were seen.

A very large number of wells run either partly or entirely dry in seasons of drought, thus occasioning hardship in certain localities. A large number of wells in the district are fitted with windlass and chains but not with buckets, and persons requiring water habitually lower their own pails, a practice which may lead to the water being fouled by the dipping of dirty vessels into the well.

Sewerage and Drainage.—The village of Newick has been provided with a system of sewerage, and a similar scheme for the village of West Firle is being actively pushed on. Most of the villages have sewerage of some kind, generally more or less primitive. Those sewers as to which some detailed information was obtainable, consist of glazed and socketted pipes, which conduct the sewage into ditches, or into catchpits or cesspits provided with "hatches," by which its discharge into the ditches may be regulated. But for the most part



there is no definite plan upon which the work is carried out, and as a result accumulations of putrefying sewage were found lying in various ditches in close vicinity to villages.

Excluding the Newick sewerage system, the sewers of the district lack proper arrangements for inspection and flushing, while ventilation is for the most part quite inadequate, and in all cases the sewage is discharged in a crude state.

Excrement and Refuse Disposal.—Perhaps the most common type of closet in the district is the hand-flushed water-closet, and such closets drain either to cesspools or to the imperfect sewers already referred to. A large number of cesspool privies exist in the district, and many of these were found in a foul and even dilapidated condition. Cesspits, in numerous instances were found to be overflowing, and the contents escaping into ditches or watercourses to ultimately reach the larger rivers. Suitable accommodation for the deposit of house refuse is much needed. At present in a great number of instances this is merely thrown upon the ground, or into open holes therein.

The District Council have not anywhere in the district undertaken the removal of excrement and refuse, a duty which is left to the inhabitants, and is much neglected.

Slaughter-Houses.—The Rural District Council possess no urban powers under which they could make byelaws for the regulation of slaughter-houses, but these places are said to be visited from time to time by the Inspector of Nuisances. With some exceptions, those which I inspected were, on the whole, fairly clean, though in some cases the flooring was out of repair. Much nuisance is said to arise at times from the accumulation of offal. Some of the slaughter-houses were found to be placed in too close proximity to dwellings, and in these instances complaints are frequently made of nuisance thus arising. In some cases the slaughtering of animals takes place in buildings which are quite unfit for the purpose, and in one instance I found that beasts were slaughtered in a portion of a cowhouse wherein milch cows were kept.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.—A register of these is kept, but the District Council have not adopted any regulations on the subject, urgently as they are needed owing to the great quantity of milk—chiefly separated—and cream, sent to Brighton, and to London and its suburbs.

Several well-known dairy companies obtain portions of their supplies from the dairy farms in this district, and I noted, incidentally, that chemical preservatives are largely used.

I am disposed to think that the list of milk purveyors upon the register at the time of my visit was not complete, by reason of too liberal an interpretation of section 6 of the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order of 1885. Such dairies as I visited were for the most part fairly clean, but the cowsheds showed a noticeable lack of care and attention. Moreover, the accumulations of manure, sometimes of enormous size, in some cases piled up against the sides of cowhouses, in others forming immense heaps, with numerous pools of liquid filth in the centre of the foldyard, call for the intervention of the District Council. In many cases the farmyards were found to be almost ankle-deep in foul slush. Remonstrance at once elicited the reply that farmyards were always dirty. But this degree of filth could be avoided by requiring that the surrounding buildings should be furnished with eavespouting and “down pipes,” and by the provision of drainage to get rid of the accumulation of rain water.

Attention must also be drawn to the practice, now very prevalent, of carrying out the process of cooling the milk either in the open cowhouse or in a small portion of it, more or less imperfectly screened off from the main body of the structure. In such places the floors are too frequently inadequately cleansed, in some indeed they seem rarely to be so, and risk to the milk there dealt with must be considerable.

In cowhouses the amount of cubic space and the means of ventilation of cowhouses were frequently found insufficient, and markedly so in some cases. In a number of cases, too, the water supply was found to be of a very suspicious character, being taken from shallow dry steined wells actually sunk in the farmyards or their close vicinity.

In one case the nature of the water supply deserves special record. At the farm in question twenty cows were kept at the time of my visit, and the milk was sent to Brighton. I was informed that the milk vessels were washed with cold water taken from a brick cemented rain-water tank sunk in the ground. The cover had apparently, to judge from its appearance, been removed for some little time. Upon the ground round about the large opening of this tank was lying a quantity of human excrement. The "cowman" informed me that the farm hands, not being provided with any privy at all, resorted for their convenience to the vicinity of this water tank, which is situated in a retired spot behind one of the cowhouses.

I am informed that there are no *common lodging-houses* in the district.

Action with respect to Infectious Diseases.-- Although the Rural District Council adopted the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, in the early part of 1890, they at present possess neither isolation hospital nor disinfecting apparatus. I am informed that at present the four parishes of St. John Without, St. Ann Without, Southover Without, and South Malling Without, having a total population of 488, have a right to send cases to the Borough of Lewes Infectious Diseases Hospital. The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Gravely, in his annual report for 1898, has called the serious attention of the District Council to the great need of an isolation hospital, a sharp outbreak of diphtheria at Wivelsfield furnishing a suitable text for his observations.

DETAILED RESULTS OF INSPECTION OF THE VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORY PLACES.

BARCOMBE (area, 5,032 ; population, 1,068).

This is a rural parish, the scenery of which is generally of a picturesque character. It is watered by several streams draining to the River Ouse, which is itself the boundary of the parish for some distance on the eastern and south-eastern sides.

The village of Barcombe, or Barcombe Cross, is the only considerable aggregation of dwellings. It is said to rest partly on the Lower Green Sand and partly on the Weald Clay. It is cleanly kept as regards external appearance. The houses seem for the most part substantial, and many are attractive in character, being built of brick and weather tiled, though a few of the smaller cottages stand in need of repair, and of the provision of eavespouting and downfall pipes, together with means for the disposal of rain water. Paving around houses is often of a very unsatisfactory kind. Garden ground is as a rule sufficient in extent, but I noticed a row of nine houses which are provided with but very little curtilage.

The only public water supply is that obtainable from a single tap or spout, of an ornate character, which was put up as a Memorial of the 1897 "Jubilee." The water is said to be piped from an adjacent spring and the flow appears small. I could hear of no analysis of the water. With this exception, water appears to be obtained exclusively from private wells, the exact depths of which were not ascertainable. The wells are mostly dry steined. Several of them were found to be so placed as to be liable to contamination, and I was informed that the water supply is considerably diminished and scarce in dry summers. In some instances the supply is of a very unsatisfactory kind. For one isolated cottage the only provision is a small cemented dipping place

about three feet deep, into which a surface spring is said to rise, and which is directly exposed to surface contamination of various kinds. At the bottom of the dipping place was a quantity of foul mud.

I am informed that the greater part of the village was sewer'd about 10 years ago by means of two lengths of 9-inch glazed socketted pipes, carried down behind the houses on either side of the street. At the lower part of the village these two sewers unite, the conduit thus formed being taken into some extensive grass meadows, wherein have been placed catchpits furnished with hatches, to direct the flow in various directions over the surrounding land. But, however this may be, a great deal of faecal matter finds its way into a ditch, which I found full of decomposing sewage. It is evident that after heavy rain much of this must be washed into an adjacent pond, and in flood times undoubtedly reaches the adjacent river.

I could not learn that it was anyone's business to attend to these regulating hatches, but it would seem that anyone may open or shut them. A farmer of whom I made inquiry on the subject of the patches of coarse grass growing in these meadows informed me that cattle refuse it, and hay made from it is so rank that the admixture of it with other hay will at times contaminate nearly a whole stack. He also informed me that children and unauthorised persons frequently tampered with the catchpits and hatches. I did not hear that any means of flushing had been provided for the sewers.

A considerable number of houses are furnished with hand-flushed closets of the "long hopper" type, many of which were in need of a thorough flushing. In other cases cesspit privies were found, some of which needed cleansing. In one case the cesspit was a mere open hole, and the privy was in a dilapidated and filthy condition. The provision of proper ash pits is needed. In many cases house refuse is deposited on the ground at any convenient spot, often closely contiguous to the dwelling-house.

Considerable complaint was made of nuisance from slaughter-houses, of which there are two in the village. As regards cleanliness, these were found, when visited, to be in fairly good condition, although their drainage arrangements did not appear satisfactory, and complaint was made that offal and filth have at times been allowed to accumulate. In one case pigs were being kept adjacent to the slaughter-house, which is too near to a row of cottages.

It seems likely that there may be a considerable development of Barcombe in the future, as two lines of railway cross the parish and there are two separate railway stations, while the village is at a convenient distance from Lewes and within easy reach of Brighton.

BEDDINGHAM (area, 2,888; population, 454).

This parish is situated partly on the Downs and partly in the vale between Mount Caburn and the Firle range of hills. The northern boundary of the parish is formed by a branch of the Ouse known as "Glynde Reach."

The village of Beddingham is composed of a few scattered cottages not calling for any special remark. Certain cowhouses drain into a meadow through which runs a public footpath. Hereabouts a ditch and also a small pond were found to be full of farmyard liquid drainage in a state of decomposition, the stench being overpowering at a considerable distance.

CHAILEY (area, 5,939 ; population, 1,333).

This agricultural parish contains extensive commons and open country as well as much of the wild woodland scenery characteristic of Sussex.

The village of Chailey is an extensive and scattered one; indeed, it may be taken to consist of three separate aggregations of dwellings, viz., Chailey North Common, Chailey, and South Street, an outlying hamlet to the south.

Garden space is on the whole sufficient. Most of the houses are fairly substantial as regards external appearance, although in some instances eavespouting and downpipes are either absent or broken. Paving of yards and curtilages is frequently absent or very defective, especially in the more outlying localities. The only public water supply, properly so called, that came to my knowledge in Chailey parish is that provided by the public well and force-pump recently provided at South Street through the generosity of a local landowner. This supply of water is said to be good, but though the force-pump yields freely, the supply cannot be considered sufficient for the wants of the whole neighbourhood. In the immediate vicinity are some 30 houses, all of which depend entirely upon this source of drinking water, and some of the inhabitants have to carry this for upwards of 150 yards, while others appear to resort to the well from a much greater distance.

In all other cases inhabitants of cottage dwellings are dependent upon private wells situated either on their own premises or those of neighbours.

Very little information was obtainable as to the depths of the various wells—which are mostly dry steined—but this probably does not exceed 50 feet. In many cases the contained water cannot fail to be directly contaminated from the surface of the surrounding ground with which their edges are flush, while in other instances soakage of foul liquid is highly probable, the wells being mostly dry steined. I heard of many instances of wells in which the water was more or less brackish in this parish. In some cases this brackish water is practically the only supply obtainable, unless water be carried either from a great distance or from a neighbouring stream. In one instance I found a group of seven cottages whose inhabitants are entirely dependent upon this brackish water, which is often strongly purgative. Three cases of enteric fever occurred in 1896 in this locality. I heard of few wells of which the yield is not diminished in summer, and this in some cases to such an extent as to cause serious hardship.

There is no regular sewerage in Chailey with the exception of that conveying sewage from the hand-flushed closets belonging to the National Schools into a cesspool in an adjacent meadow. Cesspit privies are found in most instances, though in some cases hand-flushed closets have been provided draining to cesspools, the emptying of which seems to be uncertain and irregular, while the application of the cesspit contents to the garden ground in the vicinity of the shallow wells cannot fail to endanger the wholesomeness of the contained water. In the case of the cesspool receiving the sewage of the National Schools, I was unable to learn that this had been emptied since 1896, while the rank grass thereabouts growing indicated that overflow is taking place over the surrounding ground and thence into the neighbouring stream.

House refuse is deposited at any convenient spot. Covered ashbins are the exception; where ashpits exist they are generally unprovided with any cover, but more often refuse is thrown on the ground until it can be conveniently got rid of in gardens. In some places I found considerable nuisance caused by pig-keeping. At a group of cottages at Chailey South Common I found the drainage from privies and piggeries draining together into one pool of filth, and thence into a ditch. A well had been recently sunk at this spot, but was quite useless as the water was brackish.

At the Chailey National Schools, where at the time of my visit there were 220 children on the books, I found the closets in need of flushing, and the urinals too near the schoolroom windows. Drinking water is obtained by means of a pump from a well of which the situation did not appear to be known.

DITCHLING (area, 4,265 ; population, 1,226).

This parish is a long strip of country forming the most western portion of the district. The little town of Ditchling stands about the centre of the parish and occupies a pleasant situation near the foot of the most elevated ridge of the South Downs. The market, which was established here at the beginning of the 14th century, is no longer held.

The southern portion of the Parish of Ditchling is occupied by pasture lands.

The township itself, being only eight miles respectively from Brighton and Lewes, and only about two miles from Hassocks Station, appears prosperous, and is likely to increase in the future. Houses appear to be of a sufficiently substantial character and generally well cared for. There is said to be a good supply of water from the mains of the Burgess Hill Water Company.

The town has a system of sewerage which was carried out some years ago. There are three separate sewers, viz., that discharging at the northern outfall, that at the southern, and that at the eastern. The two former commence at about the same point, viz., near the "North Star," in the centre of the village. The *northern* outfall sewer is of 9-inch glazed and socketted pipes, cement jointed. The outfall is into a ditch at a point called "White Rails," outside the village, from whence it finds its way among the fields. At the time of my visit there was little evidence of any sewage matter hereabouts. The *southern* outfall sewer is of a similar character, but discharges into a water-course, which is said to run quite dry in summer, at the south end of the village. There have been a good many complaints in the past as to this outfall, though none very recently, it is said. At the time of my visit there was a good deal of foul liquid in the ditch in question—the outfall to it being a 15-inch brick culvert. The eastern sewer, which runs from the centre of the village, is of a similar character to that of the other two, and discharges by two contiguous outfalls into a ditch at some little distance from the town. The prevailing type of closet—at any rate in the smaller class of dwellings—appears to be the hand-flushed, long hopper kind.

There is no public system of removal of house refuse; but I heard of no complaints upon this score. On the whole there is a good provision of garden ground for the utilisation of house refuse.

EAST CHILTINGTON (area, 1,671 ; population, 436).

This is an entirely rural parish occupying nearly the centre of the district and containing only a few scattered houses calling for no special remark. The National Schools in the parish receive the children from Chailey Workhouse. The latrines, which are of the long hopper, hand-flushed type, drain to a cess-pit behind the schools, but I was unable to obtain any information as to its construction or method of emptying.

GLYNDE (area, 1,570 ; population, 329).

This rather small parish is almost entirely occupied by stock and dairy farms. The southern boundary of the parish is "Glynde Reach," a tidal branch of the Ouse. The village of Glynde is situated at the eastern base of Mount Caburn—a commanding and isolated eminence of the South Downs, about nine miles in circumference. "Glynde Place," the residence of Lord Hampden, adjoins the village. The daily dispatch of milk cans from Glynde Station is very large, as the business of the largest dairy in the South of England, viz., the "Glynde Creameries," is carried on here. Steam separators are employed, the separated milk being subsequently sent to London and elsewhere.

As to the village itself, most of the houses seem of fairly substantial construction, and the place, generally, appears prosperous. Garden ground is for the most part sufficient for the disposal of house refuse, while privy refuse is frequently removed to some little distance.

From a well on the premises of the "Creameries Company" water is raised by a steam pump and is forced to a large cemented tank on the side of the hill above the village, whence it flows by gravitation and is laid on to most of the houses.

Complaint was made to me as to a slaughter-house in the locality. I found that the place had been recently lime-washed, but it was in a dilapidated condition. Blood appears to drain to a catchpit, whence it overflows into a brook and thus finds its way to Glynde Reach. A quantity of pieces of flesh

were lying in the slaughter-house in a decomposing condition. Pigs, also, are kept adjacent to the slaughter-house. The spot does not appear a suitable one for the carrying on of the business of slaughtering animals unless under carefully regulated conditions.

HAMSEY (area, 2,745 ; population, 564).

This is another rural parish, containing the hamlets of Offham and the straggling village of Cooksbridge.

The hamlet of Offham occupies a lofty situation on the side of a ridge of the Downs. Most of the houses, which are few in number, appear to be of a substantial character and to be cleanly kept. Gardens are of good size, and I met with no special defects of excrement or refuse disposal. The houses on the east and west sides of the road are provided with pipe drains which convey slop water to a ditch and into a paddock respectively.

There is one well, apparently about 150 feet deep, available for public use, situated at the extremity of the village and provided with windlass and chain with which inhabitants lower their own pails. The water is said to be good, and the supply unfailing. Twelve cottages were found to depend for their supply upon two dry-stained wells, apparently about 100 feet deep, fitted with chain and windlass. It is stated that the water in these wells gets very low in summer, though it does not fail altogether. At the Offham Schools, where at the time of my visit about 100 children were on the books, there is no water supply other than that obtainable from rain-water tanks fitted with a pump, which is in the girls' and infants' playground. I am informed that water has to be fetched daily in pails from a cottage at a little distance. The closets at the schools are provided with pails which, I was informed, are emptied three times a week and the contents buried at some little distance. I heard many complaints in this locality of the difficulty of procuring a supply of wholesome water during long spells of dry weather.

The village of Cooksbridge is a very scattered one, and some of the cottages forming part of it are of a very poor description and among the worst met with in the whole of the district. Only three dilapidated privies are provided for one group of some seven cottages on the southern outskirts of the village. Excreta fall into a ditch which was found brimful of decomposing sewage exhaling a stench which was offensive at a considerable distance. The only water supply is obtained from one dry-stained dip-well sunk in the kitchen garden and provided with a rotting wooden collar and cover. The well is some 16 feet deep, and the water stands about 4 feet from the surface. The cottages themselves are much dilapidated, devoid of eave spouting, and there is little or no paving around them.

In Cooksbridge village itself a good many dilapidated cottages were seen ; eave spouting was found to be broken and defective, and down pipes are frequently absent or broken. Water supply is generally very defective. The wells—some of which are furnished with pumps while others are intended for dipping—are shallow, and in many cases the water is stated by the tenants to be bad. In two or three instances I found water drawn from these wells to be turbid, and in other cases it is said to become thick after rain. I could hear of no sewerage in Cooksbridge. Cesspit privies are employed generally, and these are often out of repair and in a foul condition.

Ditch nuisances were rife at the time of my visit. Drainage from slop gulleys appears to be discharged into ditches, some of which were full of filthy liquid, into which had flowed drainage from the heaps of manure and refuse of various kinds. Many complaints were received as to the nuisance caused by these foul places.

NEWICK (area, 1,977 ; population, 1,003).

This parish forms the extreme north-eastern portion of the district, and much of its scenery is of an extremely picturesque character. The village of Newick occupies a rather high situation, from which the ground falls to the

north, affording in that direction an extensive prospect over Ashdown Forest. The houses are fairly substantial, and, moreover, are cleanly kept. For some years this locality has been a favourite resort during the summer for visitors from London and Brighton, who obtain lodgings in the farmsteads and cottages. Of late the reputation of the place had suffered by reason of its reported defects of drainage and sanitation ; it has nevertheless continued to increase, and is gradually taking on a high-class residential character. The water supply is, generally speaking, defective. A well was sunk on the village green in 1897 in commemoration of the Jubilee. The well is about 25 feet deep, dry steined and furnished with a pump. The supply is said to have never failed altogether in summer. The expense of this work was defrayed by public subscription. This is the only public supply that came to my knowledge. The inhabitants, who do not resort to it, obtain drinking water from wells on their own or their neighbours' premises, the depth of such wells, which are generally dry steined, being in some cases as much as 50 feet. The total number of these wells is undoubtedly insufficient for the needs of the locality, and the water in all of them is said to become very low in seasons of drought, and in some cases the wells run completely dry. At one group of houses, a well was seen about 80 feet deep, dry steined, and apparently containing about 10 feet of water ; the cover was flush with the sloping garden ground, and that the contained water is contaminated must be considered probable. The defects of the water supply for the various schools were more evident. At Newick National Schools I was informed there were 71 children on the books. No drinking water supply is furnished for the children, though it would appear that pails of water are at times fetched. A neighbouring cottager informed me that as many as 40 children a day resorted to his premises in summer time to beg for water from his well, which I examined and found to be dry steined and liable to contamination ; indeed, soakage could be seen going on from the sides. The schools are provided with a rainwater tank, the contents of which are not intended for drinking. In the National School latrines, the excreta appear to fall upon the bare earth beneath the seats, whence they are raked out once a week and put upon garden land near by. The urinal was found to have a species of overflow drain discharging into the playground.

In addition to the National Schools, there are the Lady Vernon Endowed Schools, where I was informed that 53 scholars were on the books, and the Board School for infants having 35 names on the books. At neither of these schools was there any supply of drinking water laid on, but water had to be brought from wells on neighbouring premises, such wells being liable to pollution.

Newick has recently been provided with a system of sewerage, to which, it is believed, all the residences in the village, except six, are now connected. By means of glazed and socketted pipes, the sewage is carried to a meadow on the property of a neighbouring landowner. Here are precipitation tanks, from which the liquid is applied to the land, the effluent finding its way to a small brook which falls into the Longford stream. The establishment of this scheme has caused the abolition of the objectionable cesspools that previously existed at Newick.

Garden ground is for the most part ample, and I heard of no nuisance arising through refuse disposal, although it is alleged that there is at times considerable negligence as regards this.

PLUMPTON (area, 2,450 ; population, 468).

This rural parish, like several others, occupies a long narrow strip of the district. The southern portion includes the well-known eminence called "Plumpton Plain." The northern escarpment of the Downs is in this locality remarkably bold and precipitous. The hamlet of Plumpton lies to the extreme south of the parish, at the foot of the Downs, and consists of only a few scattered houses calling for no special remark. The more populous portion of the parish is situated at the spot known as Plumpton Green, to the north of Plumpton

Railway Station. In this locality there appears to be a considerable commercial activity. Brickmaking is carried on, and adjacent to the station, on the south side, is the large creamery belonging to the South Coast Dairy Company. Several houses here have been recently built, and the majority of the others appear to be of a fairly substantial character, and garden ground is sufficient. The water supply is entirely obtained from private wells, many of which seem to vary in depth, as far as I could learn, from 40 to 80 feet. They are generally sunk in vegetable gardens, and are dry steined up to within a short distance from the top. At one spot I found a well undergoing a process of cleansing. The workmen informed me that it was 86 ft. in depth, and that water was reached at 20 ft. from the surface. Cesspit privies exist to a considerable extent, while hand-flushed closets draining to cesspools are also found. I noticed one cesspool which receives the drainage of four cottages to be full to overflowing. There is evidently considerable nuisance from stagnant ditches hereabouts, which receive slop drainage and soakage from refuse heaps and the like, together with occasional cesspool overflows.

RINGMER (area 5,739 ; population, 1,497).

This is the most extensive parish of the Rural District, and contains one picturesque but very straggling village of the same name. The village is now taking on something of an urban character, and I am informed that building land is in demand.

The main street of the village runs from south-west to north-east, the south-western portion standing upon the Upper Greensand, and the north-eastern upon the Lower Greensand, while between these the central part rests upon a belt of the Gault. Garden ground is, generally speaking, ample. The houses seem to be fairly substantial, though a few cottages are somewhat dilapidated, and in several instances eavespouting and downpipes were found to be absent or defective. The public water supply of Ringmer is obtained from two wells, one in the centre of the village and the other at the east end of it, the latter being, I am informed, an artesian well, to which a great number of persons resort. With these two exceptions, the water supply of Ringmer is entirely from private wells. A large number of these wells are now believed by the inhabitants to yield water unfit for drinking purposes, and consequently persons have in many instances to send a great distance for water from the artesian well. Of the private wells it would seem that there are few that have not been condemned at one time or another. Many are adjacent to cesspools, which are believed or known to be leaky. I met with instances of houses which, from these causes, are without any water supply at all, save such as the inhabitants procure from a long distance. There was such unwillingness on the part of residents to complain, that I had no small difficulty at times in obtaining information on this and kindred subjects. A sewer of a rudimentary character exists at Ringmer, but it dates from a remote period, and has been extended and altered from time to time in various localities, so that no definite plan is obtainable. All that I could learn was that this sewer was laid only in that portion of Ringmer to the south-west of the green. The older part of the sewer would appear to be of brick barrel, and the more recent of glazed piping. Sewage of all kinds is thus conveyed from the groups of houses in the vicinity of the church on the north side of the village to a large dry bricked cesspit or catchpit in a vegetable garden in the village. I could not learn that it was the business of any person to attend to this catchpit which adjoins the road and is much complained of.

The surface water from the same locality is said to pass into a gully near the same spot. From this place, by one species of sewer or another, the sewage and drainage is conveyed in a south-westerly direction to a point in the road opposite the premises of a wheelwright, beneath which it passes, and finally, is said to be got rid of by passing through a chalk drain into a ditch hereabouts. Near this spot I found several ditches full of stagnant and stinking liquid filth; although complaint was made, I gathered that this dangerous nuisance was looked upon as one which had to be endured. Close adjacent I found a

bricked well said to be about 30 ft. deep, and to yield an unfailing supply of water. This water appears to be employed for washing the vessels used in a small unregistered milk business.

For the eastern portion of Ringmer, where even such rudimentary sewerage as this does not exist, I was informed that great nuisance is caused by the frequent overflowing of cesspools into ditches, and that the pollution of the water in the wells is a recognised fact.

At Ringmer Board Schools, where some 300 children are on the books, I was informed that the only supply of drinking water was that carried from the artesian well at a considerable distance.

In an outlying portion of Ringmer, known as Rushey Green, a number of cottages were seen worse than any others met with in the district. One row of wooden hovels, in a ruinous condition, devoid of eavespouting and down pipes, with dilapidated privies communicating with bogholes, appeared quite unfit for habitation, although even here there was abundant space available for garden purposes.

I was informed that hereabouts the water in some of the wells rises and falls with that in the ditches.

ST. ANN WITHOUT (area, 1,552 ; population, 82).

ST. JOHN WITHOUT (area, 1,202 ; population, 146).

SOUTHOVER WITHOUT (area, 288 ; population, 19).

These three parishes are entirely rural and contain no hamlets. In the first named the greater portion of the Lewes race course is situated.

SOUTH MALLING WITHOUT (area, 2,367 ; population, 241).

The parish although skirting closely the northern and eastern portion of the Borough of Lewes is entirely rural, and contains only scattered houses. A large portion of the parish is occupied by steeply rising down land used for grazing purposes.

STREET (area, 1,281 ; population, 208).

This is a rural parish about five miles in length, and in breadth nowhere exceeding half a mile.

The little isolated hamlet of Street is placed on elevated ground adjacent to the Elizabethan mansion known as "Street Place."

At the Street Schools I was informed that the school well, from which water is obtained for the children, becomes very low in summer, as do certain other wells in the parish. Some, indeed, last summer were entirely exhausted. The school water-closets drain to a cesspool or catch-pit outside the school premises on the south side. From this an exit pipe passes to join a drain pipe which takes the slop water from a group of cottages, and discharges the same into a small watercourse.

WEST FIRLE (area, 3,429 ; population, 530).

The parish of West Firle occupies the extreme south-eastern area of the District. Adjacent to the village of West Firle, which stands on rising ground on the north-east slope of the downs, is the mansion known as "Firle Place," the residence of Lord Gage. The village stands upon the Middle Chalk formation, but adjacent to this is a small deposit of valley Gravel, upon which the West Firle Schools probably stand, as well as certain cottages, at one of which, at the time of my visit, a man employed as a butcher was suffering from enteric fever. I was informed that there is only one house in the village not belonging to Lord Gage. The cottages and houses of the village of West Firle seem to be very well and neatly kept and garden ground is sufficient. Certain instances of absent or defective eavespouting and down pipes were noted, as

well as absence of or defective paving about houses, some of which are said to be damp. Water is exclusively obtained from private wells and the supply is said to be very insufficient during the summer months and seasons of drought. It was also stated that Lord Gage had arranged to lay mains into the village, in order to convey water to the inhabitants from the closed reservoir on his own property. A new scheme of sewerage for West Firle is now about to be carried out which will abolish the nuisances caused by defective cesspools. At the present time West Firle sewage is carried by various short lengths of sewer pipes to a ditch, the condition of which in summer is said to be most offensive.

WESTMESTON (area, 2,436 ; population, 282).

This is an entirely rural parish occupying a narrow belt of the district towards the west. The hamlet of Westmeston is about a mile from Ditchling and contains only a few scattered houses calling for no special observations. The geological formation underlying the greater part of the village is the Lower Chalk. Water is obtained exclusively from private wells. At Westmeston Schools, where, at the time of my visit, 33 children were on the books, I found that the hand-flushed closets, draining to a cesspool, were in need of flushing. The exact situation of the cesspool was not known, but it is said not to have been cleaned out for the last four years.

WIVELSFIELD (area, 3,142 ; population, 1,983).

The parish occupies the extreme north-west corner of the district, extending at one point, to within two miles, by road, of Hayward's Heath Station, and including in its boundaries the very extensive buildings of the County Lunatic Asylum. The Northern portion of the parish of Wivelsfield is of an urban character. At a point beside the main road, and near the County Lunatic Asylum, the Chailey and Cuckfield Rural Districts and the Hayward's Heath Urban District meet. The groups of houses hereabouts have for years been the subject of numerous and pressing complaints, owing to the nuisance caused by the escape of the contents of the various cesspools. Being situated on the slope of a hill surface water finds its way into the cesspits which quickly become full. The various groups of cottages in this locality were all visited. In many instances cesspits were observed to be full to overflowing. Wells were found to be from 30 to 40 feet deep, dry stained, and in many instances obviously exposed to contamination from leaking cesspools, the geological formation hereabouts being the Tunbridge Wells Sands.

GENERAL SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The Chailey Rural District Council, upon whom devolves the sanitary administration of the district, are the successors of the former Chailey Rural Sanitary Authority. The Councillors at present number twenty-five whose meetings are held monthly at the Lewes Town Hall, upon the same day as, and immediately upon the conclusion of, the meeting of the Guardians. This arrangement has been made for the convenience of those who hold the double office of Guardian and District Councillor, but considering the prolonged sittings of the former body, it may be doubted whether the arrangement is favourable to an adequate consideration of sanitary matters as the District Council does not delegate any of their powers under the Public Health Acts to any Sanitary or other Committee, with the exception of questions arising in connection with the Newick Drainage Works and the West Firle Drainage Scheme respectively, for which special Committees have been appointed, each consisting of two District Councillors and one Parish Councillor.

Of the Voluntary Acts relating to sanitary matters, the only one adopted by the District Council is the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, which came into force in March, 1890.

The only byelaws adopted in the district are those relating to "the cleansing of footways and pavements, the removal of house refuse, and the cleansing of earth closets, privies, ashpits, and cesspools," which were allowed by the Board on the 18th October, 1886.

As already stated, no regulations exist in regard to dairies or slaughter-houses.

By an order of the County Council of Sussex, confirmed by the Board on the 31st December, 1897, the former Rural District of Lewes was transferred to Chailey Rural District, as also were the Parishes of Beddingham, Glynde, and West Firle, which formed part of the former Rural District of West Firle. The officers of these various localities thus transferred were allowed to continue in office until the 25th December, 1898. On the 9th November, 1898, the Chailey Rural District Council wrote to the Board "to inquire whether there would be any objection on the part of the Local Government Board to the district of the Council being divided into two portions, and a separate Medical Officer of Health and a separate Inspector of Nuisances (who should also hold the office of District Surveyor of Highways) being appointed for each of these divisions." The feeling of the District Council was stated to be that if the Inspectors of Nuisances were debarred from holding offices as Surveyors of Highways within their respective districts, two men must cover the same ground, which would entail a serious waste of time.

To this the Board replied reminding the Council that the temporary continuance in office of the Medical Officers of Health of the transferred localities had only been sanctioned on the express condition that after above named date the District Council would appoint one Medical Officer of Health for the whole district, and that they could not sanction any arrangement whereby more than one Medical Officer of Health was appointed for the whole district. At the same time they strongly recommended the appointment of one Inspector of Nuisances and one Surveyor of Highways, each to act for the entire district.

As the result of this correspondence the Chailey Rural District Council appointed as *Medical Officer of Health* for the entire district of the Council for a period of one year from the 25th December, 1898, Mr. Richard Gravely, M.R.C.S. Eng., L.S.A., of Newick, who is receiving a salary of £105, a moiety being repayable from the county funds. In addition to the office of Medical Officer of Health, Mr. Gravely holds and has held the appointment of Medical Officer in the Chailey Union for upwards of half a century, and has been engaged in private practice for a like period. It must be added that, although upwards of 77 years of age, Mr. Gravely is remarkably active, and was able during the course of my inspection to accompany me, during entire days, on my rounds. He appears to have a good knowledge of his district, and in certain of his annual reports he has in general though distinct terms called attention to its defective water supplies, as well as to the existence of certain nuisances. In his report for the year 1898, in which he refers to the outbreak of diphtheria at Wivelsfield, he has stated the urgent need of a hospital for infectious diseases. He keeps a "Medical Officer of Health Report Book" in which he enters from time to time such matters as he deems necessary to record, but from the information given me it appears that this book is not submitted to the Council unless specially asked for, which is very rarely the case. It does not seem to be expected that he should attend the meetings of the Council in order to assist them with advice, and in point of fact he does not do so, as he has been made to understand that his presence is not desired. I saw very few instances in which there had been any record made in his report book of action ordered by the Council as the result of his reports, though this would seem in most cases to be due to the fact that there was no action to record.

As a further result of the above referred to expression of opinion on the part of the Board in regard to the appointment of a single Inspector of Nuisances for the entire district, Mr. Harry Weller, who had already been temporarily appointed Inspector of Nuisances for the parishes of Glynde, West Firle, and Beddingham, was appointed to that office by a resolution of the Rural District Council, on the 15th February, 1899, thus making this appointment cover the whole Rural District. In reply to the announcement by the

Council that this appointment had been made, the Board has replied that before sanctioning it, they would require to be furnished with some evidence that this gentleman is able to carry out satisfactorily his prescribed duties.

Mr. Weller would therefore appear to be in the position of Inspector of Nuisances on probation. His proposed salary is £90, of which it is desired that a moiety be repaid from county funds. He also holds the office of Inspector of Petroleum at an annual salary of £10, but as there are at present only two licensed vendors, the duties of this post are but nominal. Mr. Weller previous to his appointment was engaged in the business of farming, which he still carries on. It is admitted that he has had no sanitary training, though I am informed that he has been connected with the building trade, and he certainly appears to be acquainted with matters relating to drainage and sewerage ; he also seems very anxious to add to his information by every means in his power. He has a good knowledge of the district and is apparently active and zealous. The very small salary allowed for the performance of duties constantly requiring the presence of an inspector of nuisances at widely distant points of an extensive district makes it problematical whether the Council would be able, at that price, to command the services of a properly trained and efficient officer.

Mr. Weller keeps a report book, in which he appears to summarize for each monthly meeting of the District Council the facts he wishes to bring to their notice, and which he has previously entered in his pocket book. He does not appear to record the action taken by the Council in consequence of his report, and to obtain knowledge of this I had to search the minutes of the Council meetings. He regularly attends the meetings of the Council, and I was informed by the Clerk that the Council generally call him before them in reference to matters brought to their notice. I am unable, however, to avoid the conclusion that the action of the Council in such circumstances was wanting in promptitude and decision.

Several of Mr. Weller's reports have had reference to dairies, cowsheds, and the like. I found that early in July, 1898, he had reported an outbreak of diphtheria at a large milk farm, the dangerously unsatisfactory state of which at the time of my visit specially attracted my attention. The only action recorded in the minute book as taken by the Council in consequence of the outbreak of this disease at a dairy farm is that they ordered "that the Inspector of Nuisances procure disinfectants and do what is necessary in reference to the matter." The same farm was later in the same month reported on in reference to the condition of a slaughter-house there, and the minute book records that the Council directed their Inspector "to keep observation."

Mr. Weller informed me that he had, so far, issued no formal printed notices requiring the abatement of nuisances, though he stated that he had written many letters and had given verbal instructions in a great many cases.

In addition to his ordinary duties he has now undertaken the supervision of the sewage works and irrigation area of Newick, but for this he receives no remuneration from the Council. The distance of Newick from his residence is about 14 miles, but on his arrival at Newick Station he finds himself at a distance of two miles from his destination. I am informed that he visits Newick at least once a week, and frequently twice.

From the facts thus set out it will sufficiently appear that the Chailey Rural District Council have so far failed to appreciate the full extent of the serious responsibilities devolving upon them. Although the area administered by them has from time to time been visited by outbreaks of preventible disease, yet, on the whole, it has enjoyed a fortunate degree of comparative immunity which cannot be expected to continue unless the Council are prepared to act with promptitude in repressing the many dangerous nuisances existing therein, which it must be the duty of their Inspector to search for and bring before them. It is highly desirable that the Medical Officer of Health should regularly attend their meetings in order that they may have the benefit of his counsel, which should be frequently sought.

Undoubtedly the three most pressing wants of the Chailey Rural District are (1) the provision of a sufficient supply of wholesome water ; (2) the removal of the intolerable nuisance caused by the overflow of cesspools, and by

the general want of drainage in the northern part of Wivelsfield as well as in Ringmer ; and (3) the adoption of regulations and of a code of byelaws respectively as to dairies, cowsheds, milkshops, and slaughter-houses, together with the systematic registration and inspection of all these places.

The want of drainage in the northern part of Wivelsfield, which has for so many years been the subject of complaint, and which has been associated with serious outbreaks of disease, cannot any longer be disregarded.

The Council should, without delay, obtain the necessary expert engineering advice with reference to the similar needs of the large village of Ringmer.

Considering that the chief industry of this District is that of cowkeeping and dairy farming, it does not redound to the credit of the Council that so many of the cowsheds and milk premises should be allowed to remain in the unwholesome condition in which they were seen at the time of my visit. In examining the annual reports of the Medical Officer of Health, I observed that he has been in the habit of embodying the reports of the Inspector of Nuisances in his own, and that, at any rate for some years past, the Inspector in question has reported that the condition of the cowstalls on the premises of registered cow-keepers had been found satisfactory. It can only be said that a marked deterioration in this respect must have occurred, for the above description would be by no means applicable to the large majority of cowsheds visited by me. Happily the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order gives the Rural District Council all the powers that they require and it is urgently necessary that they should, without delay, adopt a set of regulations on this subject. They should in similar manner obtain the powers necessary under section 169 of the Public Health Act, 1875, to enable them to duly regulate the slaughter-houses situate in certain of the more populous places in this district.

I had the opportunity of conferring individually with several members of the District Council, and to them my thanks are due for a courteous reception. I feel it a strict duty to record my impression—formed as a result of those interviews—that the Council have the advantage of the assistance of certain gentlemen who recognise the responsibility and duty of the Council in regard to the sanitary protection of the District.

F. St. GEORGE MIVART.
